

## **Don't Touch Me, Let Me Be** by [folksbian](#)

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**Genre:** Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Apartments, M/M, Steve cares, Steve has a dog, jonathan doesn't like being touched, mention of nancy kinda, mentions of the Byers family

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**Summary:**

“Can I ask you a question?” Steve nods. “Why do you always walk your dog at 12am? Do you not enjoy sleep?”

“Don’t have time during the day and Tutu needs her exercise.” Steve responds.

## **Don't Touch Me, Let Me Be**

### **Author's Note:**

prompt: "Why do you always walk your dog at 12am? Do you not enjoy sleep?" by mewlink.tumblr.com

title is lyrics in "In My House" from Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812

Sure it was unconventional, but so was Steve. So, at 11:30pm, he grabbed his dog's leash and led her for a walk around his apartment building. She pulled him along as best as she could with her tiny body and yipped a few times. After a full two laps around the block, Steve walked her back up to his apartment. As they made their way to the elevator, Steve's neighbor from across the hall literally bumped into him. The young man dropped the laundry basket he was holding.

"Oh, I'm, uh, sorry for bumping into you," the young man with tousled hair said, averted his glance from Steve and leaning down to pick up the clothes that fell out of the basket. Steve leans down to help and they put the clothes back in the basket. Steve's hand brushes against the man's. Whether that was purposeful or not, Steve would never say.

"Hey, no problem, bro. Don't you live in 4F? I live across the hall. Steve," They stand back up together and he extends his hand for the young man to shake it.

"Jonathan," the other says without looking up or shaking Steve's hand.

"Nice to meet you, Jonathan," Steve says.

They enter the elevator and stand in silence as it approaches their floor. Steve's dog yips and jumps up on Jonathan's leg.

"Hey! No, bad girl. Do not jump on my cute neighbors leg. No. Not okay, sweet girl."

Jonathan looks over at Steve in surprise; he blushes. Then, he bends down and rubs her head. “It’s okay. She’s cute.”

“Yeah, I guess she is.”

“Can I ask you a question?” Steve nods. “Why do you always walk your dog at 12am? Do you not enjoy sleep?”

“Don’t have time during the day and Tutu needs her exercise.” Steve responds.

“Your dog’s name is Tutu?”

“Yeah, my ex-girlfriend and I got her together and her younger sister named her.” Steve says and squats down to ruffle the fur on the top of his pomeranian’s head. “So, why are you up?”

“Rough day. Got some bad news. Went to do laundry cause I couldn’t sleep,” Jonathan sighs.

“Oh, dude. I’m sorry. Do you wanna... talk about it...?”

Jonathan seems to mull the idea over in his head for a moment. Eventually he nods and says, “Yeah, I guess. Wasn’t gonna end up sleeping for a bit anyway.” He follows Steve as he leads them out of the elevator and down the hallway to his apartment door. Steve fumbles with his key for a moment and opens his door; he gestures for Jonathan to walk in.

“You can sit if you want. Would you like some hot chocolate or tea?”

“A hot chocolate?”

“You got it, bud.”

When Steve finishes making hot chocolate for both Jonathan and himself, he gives Jonathan a mug and lets himself fall onto the sofa.

“Might be little hot, so don’t burn yourself...”

Jonathan rises his eyes to acknowledge Steve and then sips from the mug. If it burns his tongue, he doesn’t acknowledge it. “So...”

“So, um, tell me what’s going on. I’m all ears.”

Jonathan looks and sighs, “My mom called earlier. My brother had a massive panic attack at school. Hit his head against a wall accidentally. She said he was gonna be fine, but I can’t help but worry. He’s so small for his age and he went through a lot when he was younger. We all did.”

“You don’t have to about it if you don’t-”

“No, it’s fine. I’m just worried about him is all. He’s a good kid and our dad was an asshole. Affected him a bit more than me I suppose.”

“That’s awful. I hope your brother’s okay.”

“Yeah, me too.”

They sat in silence for a few minutes until Tutu jumped into Jonathan lap and spilled a bit of his hot chocolate on his shirt and into the laundry basket sitting on the floor beneath him. “Oh, jeez. Tutu, get down. Jonathan, I’m so sorry. I’ll pay for your laundry,” Steve said, scrabbling to his feet and into the kitchen to get towels to clean up.

“Don’t worry about it, Steve. I’m fine and I barely got anything on me.”

“You’re wearing white shirt. Here, hand it over. I need to get the stain out.”

Jonathan sits and doesn’t say anything for a moment. “Um, I gotta go,” Jonathan says suddenly and he bolts towards the door. “Thanks for the hot coco. Don’t blame your dog for the mess. It’s okay.”

Just as Jonathan begins to open the door, Steve stops him by grabbing his arm. “Jonathan, wait.” He turns, pulling his arm out of Steve’s grasp and looks at him. “What’s wrong?” Steve asks.

“I’m sorry, I’ve just gotta go.”